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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 05 BAKU 000465

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PASS TO DASD FATA, TONY ALDWELL, AND JON CHICKY

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SUBJECT: PRESIDENT ALIYEV'S VIEWS AND SUGGESTED
DELIVERABLES FOR THE APRIL 23 USG-GOAJ BILATERAL SECURITY
DIALOGUE

REF: A. BAKU 00280

[1](#)B. BAKU 00422

[1](#)C. BAKU 01837

Classified By: Ambassador Anne E. Derse for reasons 1.4 (b, d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. In recent meetings with the Ambassador, President Aliyev, Presidential Apparatus Chief Ramiz Mehdiyev, Foreign Minister Mammadyarov, and Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov have reiterated the importance of the bilateral security dialogue as a key forum for reflecting our security cooperation. The GOAJ also seeks the establishment of a follow-up implementation mechanism to ensure the dialogue produces results. President Aliyev raised the importance of our border security cooperation and was open to discussing a US Customs and Border Protection proposal for technical assistance. He welcomed the agenda items on energy infrastructure protection, NATO, and defense sector reform. He noted his interest in a potential TEP program as a sign of USG partnership, and said it is "not excluded, not at all," that TEP-trained troops would serve in Iraq or Afghanistan, but said that as in Georgia's case, there should be "no direct link." Embassy suggests the Department consider establishing regular DVCs by the co-Chairs to monitor progress on agreed next steps as an implementation mechanism. We also strongly recommend that the US and Azerbaijan issue a joint statement at the conclusion of the dialogue on April 23, as a "visible sign" of US interest in Azerbaijan's security, as requested by President Aliyev to former DOD A/S Rodman (Reftel A). Embassy also proposes several specific objectives and deliverables for the Department's consideration. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) On the eve of the tenth annual April 23 bilateral security dialogue, senior GOAJ officials have expressed their strong interest in the forum, reflecting our growing level of cooperation. President Aliyev met with the Ambassador on April 16 to discuss the dialogue and underscore his attention to the forum (septel). Presidential Apparatus Chief Ramiz Mehdiyev, Foreign Minister Mammadyarov, and Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov separately have emphasized the importance of this year's dialogue. Azimov points out that the GOAJ is sending the highest-level and most representative delegation it has ever sent, with all the power ministries, including MOD, represented, most at the deputy minister level. Against the backdrop of broader USG efforts to invigorate and elevate our bilateral relationship, we believe this year's security dialogue is the opportunity to engage more deeply with the GOAJ on our mutual security interests.

President Aliyev Keenly Interested in Talks

¶3. (C) On April 16, the Ambassador met with President Aliyev at Chief of Staff Ramiz Mehdiyev's suggestion to discuss the Security Dialogue. The President reviewed the agenda for the talks with approval, leading with his deep concern about both of Azerbaijan's borders -- "we need to do a lot both north and south." The GOAJ has designated significant funding to make major investments in border security and is interested in "buying more equipment for border infrastructure" from the US. The State Border Service would be prepared to outline needs at the talks. Aliyev said that the funding increase was motivated in part by the fact that "more and more Iranians are crossing the border and moving in" to Azerbaijan and this is expected to continue.

¶4. (C) The Ambassador told the President that the US Customs and Border Protection service had visited Azerbaijan in January and followed up with a proposal for technical assistance on a reimbursable basis to strengthen Azerbaijan's customs service, including in its security function, which she had sent to him recently and which she hoped would be discussed at the Security Dialogue. Aliyev said he had not seen the letter yet, but agreed that Customs indeed plays a key role in border security and that discussion of the proposal at the security dialogue would be of interest. In a separate conversation, the Ambassador alerted Deputy Foreign Minister Azimov to the proposal and he also expressed interest. (COMMENT: We hope that CBP will be able to discuss its proposal with specific focus on how it will help strengthen customs role in border security at the April 23

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talks. END COMMENT)

¶5. (C) Similarly, Aliyev said, the GOAJ is interested in bolstering its abilities to protect critical energy infrastructure. The Presidential Security Service is responsible for protecting the pipelines, BTC and BTE, Aliyev said. He seemed uncertain, however, who was in the lead with respect to the security of Azerbaijan's oil platforms and Sangachal terminal. MOD, the Border Guards and the Navy, each play some role, he noted. He also noted with appreciation USG assistance in training naval commandos. (COMMENT: BP Azerbaijan President Bill Schrader has told Embassy interlocutors that Azerbaijan's platforms and the Sangachal terminal are enormously vulnerable. Two hand grenades thrown into the Sangachal terminal could put it out of business, and a small motorboat could bring down an oil platform, in Schrader's view. Septel reports further observations on energy infrastructure security. END COMMENT)

¶6. (C) Noting the agenda item on a train and equip program, Aliyev commented "Ah! This is new." The Ambassador explained that it was on the agenda because he had raised TEP with former Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld last year and the USG had been considering if/how we can respond, given acknowledged constraints. He recalled that he had raised it with Secretary Rumsfeld because Georgian President Saakashvili had told him it was a very useful program, especially for facilitating defense reform, that has been ongoing in Georgia for 7-8 years. The Ambassador noted the USG was not yet in a position to offer a TEP, but that it appears that if we will be, it would be on the basis that those trained would be deployed to Afghanistan. Aliyev replied that that would be "something different than what was offered to Georgia...in the case of Georgia there was no link to Afghanistan, to outside projects...it can be discussed, I don't mind, but there should not be a direct link. They (troops trained) can go to global hot spots, like Iraq and Aghanistan, it is not excluded, not at all, but should not be directly linked. We want it (a TEP) for general purposes, as a sign of our partnership." The Ambassador asked whether

given his view we should discuss it at the Security Dialogue.
Aliyev said yes.

¶7. (C) The President welcomed the agenda item on NATO and noted the importance of defense sector reform. The Ambassador commented that our ability to assist Azerbaijan in this regard is hampered by restricted access to the Ministry of Defense, funneled through one senior officer, and that underfunding of the Navy also impacts maritime security efforts. She told Aliyev that no Ministry of Defense representative planned to attend the talks from Baku. The President laughed and commented that Defense Minister Abiyev and Deputy Foreign Minister Azimov do not like each other, and that is why MOD was reticent. He said it is important that MOD attend and that he would instruct them to do so. (COMMENT: MOD's General Najafov is now included in the GOAJ delegation. END COMMENT)

Overarching Suggestions

¶8. (C) Given Aliyev's keen interest in the talks and desire that they produce results that reflect the growing, changing nature of our bilateral relationship, and USG support for Azerbaijan's independence and security in the face of regional pressures, we believe it is vital that the April 23 talks result in practical deliverables, the establishment of an appropriate follow-up mechanism, and receive appropriate public profile. Embassy provides the following suggestions for the Department's consideration.

¶A. Establish regular DVCs for the co-Chairs as a Follow-Up Mechanism: The USG and the GOAJ agree that a missing aspect of previous consultations was the lack of a clear follow-up and implementation mechanism. Both sides have expressed their interest in making the security dialogue a productive results-oriented forum. Azimov told the Ambassador on April 12 that the GOAJ strongly supports establishing some form of an implementation mechanism (Reftel B). Embassy proposes that a key result of the April 23 dialogue should be creating a follow-up mechanism. Specifically, Embassy proposes establishing quarterly DVCs for the bilateral security dialogue chairs to discuss the status of agreed upon action items. Working level officials

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would take forward agreed action items with the aim of reporting to the regular DVC's of the co-chairs.

¶B. Issue a Joint Press Statement: MFA and we agree that we should issue a joint press statement at the conclusion of the April 23 dialogue, marking the tenth anniversary of our annual consultations on security and its strengthening this year. Such a statement would address President Aliyev's February request to former Department of Defense A/S Peter Rodman for, and A/S Rodman's offer to provide, "more public signs" from the USG of our support for Azerbaijan's independence and security in the face of regional pressures (Reftel A). (Note: Embassy emailed Azimov's specific suggested themes to Department on April 17. We agree with these suggested themes.)

Suggested Objectives and Deliverables

¶9. (C) Embassy provides the following agenda-specific suggestions for concrete outcomes of the dialogue. As noted above, we propose that the quarterly DVCs address progress on the proposed action items:

¶A. Maritime Security: Our bilateral assistance cooperation in this area is solid. Importantly, Azimov has now requested USG advice on crafting a comprehensive "Maritime Security Concept" for Azerbaijan, to "harmonize and synergize" the GOAJ's currently divided efforts. Since one of our major problems in advancing Caspian maritime security here is lack

of cooperation between the Navy and the Coast Guard, this effort will advance our interests as well. We suggest agreeing to Azimov's April 17 request for USG assistance in developing a Maritime Security Concept. Azimov noted that this paper would lay out the risks and threats to Azerbaijan, identify the major players and how to harmonize and synergize their efforts. The effort will help identify gaps in Azerbaijan's current maritime security posture. Both sides could agree to draft this document by next year's dialogue, with regular consultations in a DVC forum.

1B. Border Security: In line with President's Aliyev's push to strengthen border security and interest in "buying equipment" from the US for this purpose, Azimov has told us that the State Border Service will outline specific needs. A second objective for this agenda item would be to secure GOAJ commitment to further consider the February 2007 US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) proposal for technical assistance (advisors) to the State Customs Committee on a fully reimbursable basis to help strengthen Customs role in border security. We believe we need, as a next step, agreement to further consultations between CBP and the State Committee to see how the proposal can be made compatible with GOAJ legislation, including the new Customs Code. The GOAJ could report back on its decision during the first DVC.

1C. Critical Energy Infrastructure Protection: The GOAJ seeks to strengthen its capabilities to protect Azerbaijan's critical energy infrastructure. It is in our interest that Azerbaijan remain a reliable supplier to Europe and global markets and that it protect effectively, for purposes of domestic stability and development, its chief revenue earner. The objective of this session would be agreement that a group of USG experts visit Azerbaijan to assist the GOAJ to conduct an assessment of vulnerabilities, current capabilities and needs, similar to the assistance we provide the Gulf countries under the Gulf Security Dialogue on this issue.

1D. OSCE, UN, GUAM, EU: While the GOAJ has not clearly articulated its objective for this agenda item, the Azerbaijani delegation will likely focus on gaining USG support in these multilateral forums to bolster its position on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. We have been clear that the OSCE Minsk Group is the key forum for resolving the conflict. We could use this agenda item to underscore to the GOAJ that we will only support a UNGA resolution on the conflicts if it will contribute to a peaceful solution. Concerning GUAM and the EU, we propose soliciting the GOAJ's goals for their participation with these two organizations.

1E. Security Outside the Caspian and the Organization of the Islamic Conference: The proposed objective is to solicit the GOAJ's specific plans for playing an increased role in

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enhancing security outside of the immediate Caspian region. It would be useful to see what non-military contributions the GOAJ could bring to the table. Azimov told the Ambassador he plans to brief the USG delegation on important new non-military contributions in Afghanistan that GOAJ will propose in May to NATO, including the construction of a girl's school, participation in a provincial reconstruction team, and demining and police training for Afghani police. The FonMin has also discussed GOAJ encouraging a broader OIC role there and in Iraq. We suggest encouraging the GOAJ to consider joining the International Compact for Iraq. The co-Chairs could discuss the status of GOAJ proposals during future DVCs. As the GOAJ budget grows with energy revenues, we should encourage the GOAJ to match its resources to its declaratory statements. The GOAJ repeatedly has focused on its role as a model Muslim country that can spread the value of religious tolerance. The GOAJ has used its role as the Chair of the OIC's Foreign Ministers' Conference (a term that ends this summer) to showcase this role. The GOAJ's interest in playing a broader role in promoting security outside the

Caspian is not limited to Azerbaijan's OIC membership, however. For example, the GOAJ sees its military contributions in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Kosovo as part of its effort to promote stability. Foreign Minister Mammadyarov has also indicated the GOAJ's interest in helping stabilize Lebanon.

F. Nonproliferation: The suggested objective of this session would be to clarify definitively the GOAJ's position on PSI and decide on any new areas of non-proliferation cooperation. Working together with the GOAJ on its proposed "Maritime Security Concept" also could serve as a forum for examining ways to augment our existing cooperation.

G. Lunch session on Regional Relations: Azimov said that from his personal perspective, this is one of the two most important agenda items (the second key agenda item for Azimov is the Security Sector Reform and NATO IPAP session.) The suggested objective of this session would be to solicit Azimov's perceptions on recent Iranian and Russian behavior. Following up on A/S Rodman's visit (Reftel A), we suggest this exchange of views be cast under the broader umbrella of our interest in a sustained dialogue -- similar to the Gulf Security Dialogue -- to consult with the GOAJ concerning its threat perceptions vis-a-vis Iran.

H. Security Sector Reforms and NATO IPAP: As noted above, Azimov identified this as one of the two most important agenda items. He has been notably successful, in Azerbaijan's weak bureaucratic climate, in establishing a functional interagency process with the GOAJ's power ministries and putting together the country's National Security Concept (Reftel C). He hopes to keep this process going in the second stage of IPAP -- which the GOAJ will develop with NATO this spring -- to effect greater "security sector reform." It is in our interest to support this effort. The suggested objectives of this agenda item are: (a) to ask for a preview of the key issues under discussion between the GOAJ and NATO regarding Azerbaijan's new IPAP and encouraging that the new IPAP be made public; (b) to clarify the GOAJ's specific security sector reforms; and (c) to secure concrete commitments from the GOAJ on Nasosnaya air base. We understand that Washington has identified an excellent candidate in response to the GOAJ's request for a USG advisor in government-to-government consultation on the IPAP process (along with the UK, German and Turkish advisors who with the US compose the "quartet" advising the GOAJ on its NATO process). The GOAJ's efforts to draft and review national security-related documents and create a genuine interagency process on national security issues are part of Azerbaijan's NATO IPAP commitments. Engaging with the GOAJ on this issue also would give us unprecedented access to and ability to influence the GOAJ's internal deliberations on key national security documents with implications for the US.

I. Coalition Contributions: The suggested objectives would be to secure new non-military contributions from the GOAJ and for the USG to brief the Azerbaijani delegation on the status of coalition efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan. Per Reftel B, Azimov told the Ambassador on April 12 that he will brief participants on several new non-military contributions to Afghanistan that the GOAJ seeks to announce in May at the NAC -- specifically, contributions to a Provincial Reconstruction team, funding the

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constructions of a girls school, and security and demining training in Baku for Afghanistan security units. In our view, these are significant contributions that we should continue to encourage from the GOAJ. We should urge the GOAJ to join the International Compact for Iraq.

J. Azerbaijan Train and Equip (TEP): The suggested objective would be to further explore possible conditions for a TEP and GOAJ interest. We need to clarify both sides' positions. President Aliyev told the Ambassador on April 16

that he welcomed a discussion on TEP during the dialogue, but he said that any TEP mission could not be specifically linked to a deployment in Iraq or Afghanistan, as it was not in the case of Georgia. President Aliyev did not exclude a trained unit deploying to Afghanistan or Iraq, but he objected to the direct linkage. We understand that there were conditions attached to Georgia peacekeeping TEP programs (SSOP) and if we think the Georgian example can be instructive, we should explain it more fully. A peacekeeping TEP would provide a invaluable tool for pushing forward defense -- and democratic -- reform in Azerbaijan.

1K. Counterterrorism Cooperation: The suggested objective is to identify specific new areas for CT cooperation, to be followed up in quarterly DVCs. The Minister of National Security has expressed interest in more training and engagement on the non-intelligence aspects of our CT cooperation, including from the FBI. Azimov has suggested that both sides can do more to address the ideological roots of terrorism. Azimov also said the Ministry of National Security will propose increased operational measures and intelligence exchanges. We suggest both sides agree to prepare a list of non-intel proposals for enhancing CT cooperation, to be reviewed during the first DVC, and then specific proposals can be crafted.

110. (U) Embassy thanks PM and EUR for their leadership, interest, and support in preparing this year's security dialogue. The launch of an intensified security dialogue is a key step in implementing Secretary Rice's vision, outlined in her February 2007 letter to President Aliyev, to elevate, expand, and strengthen our relationship with Azerbaijan.
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